

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claims 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,002,922. Claims 15-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 20-45 were allowed.

The Examiner acknowledged applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 and noted that a certified copy of the priority application has not yet been filed.

The Examiner also acknowledged consideration of the information disclosure statement previously submitted by applicants.

In accordance with this amendment, applicants have elected to accept the allowed and allowable claims to expedite issuance of their patent. Thus rejected claims 13-14 have been canceled, and allowable dependent claims 15 and 17 have each been rewritten in amended form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 13 and, in the case of claim 15, intervening claim 14, thereby placing claims 15 and 17 in allowable form.

Claim 16 depends on now allowable claim 15 and is thus likewise allowable. Similarly, dependent claims 18 and 19 depend on now allowable claim 17 and are, therefore, likewise allowable.

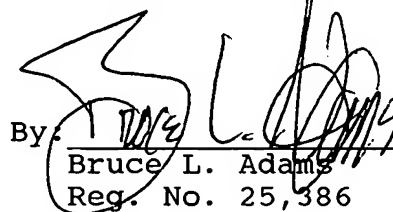
As a result of the amendments made herein, claims 1-14 have been canceled, objected to claims 15-19 have been placed in allowable form by rewriting claims 15 and 17 to independent form, and claims 20-45 stand allowed. The present amendment does, on its face, place the application in condition for allowance.

The minor amendments made herein do not raise any new issues that would require further search or consideration. Instead, applicants have rewritten objected to claims 15 and 17 to independent form and canceled rejected claims 13-14. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowability concerning claims 15-19 if rewritten in independent form, which has been done herein, no issues have been raised that would require further search or consideration. In addition, applicants have submitted a replacement sheet of drawing containing corrected Fig. 6B thereby overcoming all outstanding informalities.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and entry of this amendment together with allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

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Signature

December 16, 2003

Date